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SUBJECT: FADHILA LOOKS TO LIFE AFTER ELECTIONS

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD FOR
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: In a December 11 phone interview, Mohammed Ismael, a high ranking member of Fadhila (an anti-Moqtada, Sadrist party), told POL/FSN that his party will most likely support Adel Abdul Mehdi for Prime Minister, Bayan Jabr for Minister of Interior, and party leader Nadeem Jabiri for Vice President. Final decisions on leadership positions in the government, however, will be made after the results of the December 15 election are announced. Ismael said he expects Fadhila to garner many votes in southern Iraq. He also said that, despite what some say, the Fadhila Party has no militia. END SUMMARY.

Views On Leadership For Iraq

2. (C) Ismael said Fadhila may nominate party official Nadeem Al-Jabiri to be Vice President. Ismael also said that Fadhila will support Adel Abdul Mehdi's bid to become Prime Minister. They prefer him over current Prime Minister Ja'fari. The Fadhila Party also supports Bayan Jabr as Minister of Interior. Fadhila, however, also has its eye on the security ministries. They have prepared some professional police officers to be candidates for the Defense and Interior Ministries. Fadhila fears Ba'athists may rejoin the ISF.

3. (C) Fadhila has not made a final decision about which ministries they would like to control. This decision will be made after election results are made public. Fadhila Party leadership, however, has considered the issue and has prepared lists of three nominees to head each ministry. Ismael did say that Fadhila would like to retain control of the Ministry of Oil, but would replace the minister with a yet-unnamed party member.

Fadhila Has No Militia

4. (C) Mohammed Ismael said the Fadhila Party does not have a militia, but rather only guards for party officials. One year ago the idea of forming a militia was discussed with Sheikh Mohammed al Yaqoubi, but Sheikh Yaqoubi opposed this, saying, "Having a militia will cause more problems that it would be worth."?

The Fadhila Heartland

5. (C) Ismael said that the Fadhila Party is particularly strong in southern Iraq, especially in the provinces of Maysan, Dhi Qar (where the Provincial Council Chair is a Fadhila Party member), and Basrah (where the Provincial Governor is a Fadhila Party member). Fadhila has two kinds of supporters there: party members who like Fadhila's political platform and other members of the party who follow Sheikh Mohammed al Yaqoubi.

6. (C) COMMENT: Ismael's statements point to Fadhila's continued engagement in the UIC 555 coalition after previously declaring themselves to be "unwilling partners" and attempting to pull out of the alliance prior to the December 15 elections. It remains to be seen how many ministries and leadership positions UIC 555 will control after the elections. Fadhila could well have a significant voice in the next Iraqi government. END COMMENT.
KHALILZAD